

Since then, not one hearing has been held in the Committee on Foreign Relations. Not one.

It is a great mystery to me that a treaty that calls for the international promotion of civil and human rights for women would not be considered by the Senate.

Over 160 nations have become party to this treaty, which entered into force in 1981. To its great discredit, the United States stands outside this treaty with a just handful of other nations.

There is hardly anything revolutionary about this treaty. It contains a specific set of obligations calling on member states to enact legal prohibitions on discrimination against women—prohibitions which, in large part, the United States has already enacted.

In fact, if the United States becomes a party to the treaty, we would not need to make any changes to U.S. law in order to comply with the treaty.

So what are the opponents of this treaty supposedly concerned about?

In 1994, the five Senators who voted against the Convention in the Committee filed "minority views." In it they expressed two concerns.

First, the dissenting Senators expressed concern that, in ratifying the Convention, several nations had taken reservations to the treaty, and thereby "cheapened the coin" of the treaty and the human rights norms that it embodies.

To this objection there are two answers. First, no treaty signed by dozens of nations will ever be perfect. It will be the product of numerous compromises, some of which will not always be acceptable.

That's why the Senate thinks it so important that we retain the right, whenever possible, to offer reservations to treaties—to attempt to remedy, or if necessary, opt-out, of any bad deals agreed to by our negotiators.

Second, this Senate has frequently entered reservations in ratifying human rights treaties in the 1980s and 1990s—such as the Convention on Torture, the Convention on Racial Discrimination, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

In unanimously approving each of these treaties, the Senate imposed numerous reservations and understandings on U.S. ratification. In approving the Race Convention, for example, the Senate added three reservations, one understanding, and one condition.

Did we "cheapen the coin" of the Race Convention in doing so? The answer is no, because in entering these reservations we did not undermine the central purpose of the treaty—to require nations to outlaw racial discrimination.

The second objection registered by the five senators who voted against the Convention in 1994 is that joining the treaty was not the "best use" of our government's "energies" in promoting the human rights of women around the world.

This is a rather remarkable objection. What this group of senators was saying, in short, is that we should reserve our resources—and only promote human rights for women at certain times and in certain places.

I would hope that every senator would agree that we should promote equal rights for women at every opportunity—not when it suits us or when where it is the "best use" of our "energies." Advancing human rights and human liberty—for women and for everyone else—is a never-ending struggle.

Of course, the United States has a powerful voice, and we do not need to be a party to this Convention in order to speak out on women's rights. But we should join this Convention so we can be heard within the councils of the treaty.

Now the Senator from California stepped forward with a simple resolution which calls on the Senate to have hearings on the treaty, and for the Senate to act on the Convention by March 8, International Womens' Day.

Unfortunately, the effort to call up this resolution yesterday was objected to. So we are here on the floor today simply to try to raise the profile of this treaty. I hope that our colleagues are listening.

I urge the other members—whether on the Foreign Relations Committee or not—to step forward and join with us in urging support for this treaty.

#### MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, there is a lot of information swirling about concerning the Middle East Peace Process, specifically the so called "Syrian track." Facts and figures are being bandied about freely and there is little to indicate which are fact and which are fiction. Therefore I rise today to lay down a marker for the coming year and to express the hope that the administration will consult with Congress on a continual basis as this process picks up again.

Last year, Congress and the American people were presented with a bill for the Middle East peace process that was in excess of \$1 billion—that is \$1 billion more than the \$5 billion plus we already spend in the Middle East. And this extra bill was compiled without any congressional input. It was approved, but this is no way to do business.

The peace process is ongoing, but the President and the Department of State should consider themselves on notice from this moment on: This Congress will not rubber stamp another Wye Plantation Accord, we will not cough up another check without consultation and due consideration; we will not be left out of our Constitutionally assigned role.

I am a strong believer in the Middle East peace process. The Governments of Egypt, Jordan and Israel have shown enormous character and courage in making peace, and they deserve our

support. The nations of Egypt and Jordan, like Israel, need economic and military security in a bad neighborhood. They have made real sacrifices to do the right thing, and they have the backing of the United States.

However, ultimately, peace is not something that can be bought. Both Israel and its Arab partners, be they the Palestinians, the Lebanese or the Syrians, must make peace on their own terms without regard to sweeteners or inducements from the United States. The US has always played a historical role in promoting peace, but ultimately, peace only works when it is in the interests of the parties directly involved. Should we help? I believe we can. Should that help be the sole basis of an agreement? Unreservedly, no.

All of us who follow foreign policy issues are well aware that in this, the last year of the Clinton Administration, the President would like to preside over an historic peace between Israel and its remaining enemies in the Arab world. Perhaps we shouldn't blame President Clinton too much for yearning for a place in the history books. But President Clinton and his entire foreign policy team need to remember a few important points: 1: Congress has the power of the purse; 2: We are not the Syrian parliament: We will not rubber stamp any agreement with any price tag; 3: Notwithstanding rumors to the contrary, we are interested and wish to be kept apprised of important developments in American diplomacy. In other words, Mr. President, come and talk to us. Keep us in the loop.

I have read in the newspapers that Israel is looking at the security implications of returning the Golan Heights and is also considering requesting a security package from the United States which will be very costly. There are ongoing discussions between Israel and the Defense Department on this matter. But Congress has not been briefed. Syria too, has visions of sugar plum fairies dancing into Damascus with billions in aid; and I am sure the Lebanese will not be too far behind.

There will be many reasons to support a peace in the Middle East, but much will depend upon exactly what commitments will be expected of the United States. The President must not again make the mistake of signing IOUs which, this time, the Congress may have no intention of covering. We are willing partners in peace, but we will not accept the presentation of another fait accompli. Mr. President, we look forward to hearing from you—often.

#### WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, today I rise in recognition of Women's History Month—a time to honor the many great women leaders from our past and present who have served our Nation so well. These women have worked diligently to achieve social